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Understanding The Issues That Affect You



THIS ISSUE:
Create A Health & Safety Committee Within Your Workplace

Joint Health and Safety Committee: A Safer Workplace for All



In Canada, provinces legislate the requirements of a Health & Safety Committee within the workplace. Guidelines are established for organizing the committee, its structure, how often it meets as well as the roles and responsibilities of committee members. As an employer, you are responsible for ensuring these requirements are met – it's the law.

Each employer must consult with the applicable provincial legislation for current requirements concerning the Joint Health and Safety Committee, or what is more commonly known as the JHSC. Certain types of workplaces may be exempt from this requirement, depending on the size of the work force, industry, accident record, or some combination of these factors while some other workplaces are governed by Federal legislation. Regardless, workplaces with more than 19 employees must have a JHSC in place.

Building a Safety Culture Builds Good Business

"Besides being the law, it makes good business and safety sense to have a JHSC and Health and Safety representatives in the workplace," says Ellaline Davies, president of Ontario based Safety

Works Consulting. "There is a solid business case for empowering employees in workplace safety. Not only does it increase safety and save lives, it increases job satisfaction, promotes a safe culture and assists with employee retention."

A JHSC is part of an internal review system, acting as an auditor of management's safety system, as well as a warning alarm for safety management failures or breakdowns. It also gives individuals somewhere to turn when the safety system does not meet their needs.

JHSC's are comprised of both employees and management. There must not be more management members than employees sitting on the committee.

All members of the committee must be trained in health and safety. Training should include:

- committee responsibilities/authority
- occupational health and safety law
- principles of accident causation
- hazard recognition
- job safety analysis
- industrial hygiene
- methods of raising safety awareness
- inspections
- accident investigation

Making your workplace a "culture of safety" begins at the top with leadership encouraging everyone to take ownership of safety. Support your JHSC with education, training and resources, and your business is sure to benefit. Consult with your local safety training organization to ensure your JHSC is the best it can be.

Roles and Responsibilities Of A Joint Health & Safety Committee

The four principal functions of a Joint Health and Safety Committee are:

1. Identify potential hazards
2. Evaluate potential hazards
3. Recommend corrective action
4. Follow up on implemented recommendations

These functions are divided into specific tasks, which include:

- participating in development and implementation of programs to protect the employees' safety and health,
- dealing with employee complaints and suggestions concerning safety and health,
- ensuring the maintenance and monitoring of injury and work hazard records,
- monitoring and following-up on hazard reports and recommending action,
- setting up and promoting programs to improve employee training and education,
- participating in all safety and health inquiries and investigations,
- consulting with professional and technical experts,
- participating in resolving workplace refusals and work stoppages,
- making recommendations to management for accident prevention and safety program activities, and
- monitoring the effectiveness of safety programs and procedures.



* In Canada, all workers have the right to know about hazards, to refuse unsafe work and to participate in safety.

* In the 1970s, worker injury and death was more than double the rate it is today.

* A JHSC does not take the place of a Safety Coordinator; they work together.



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